

**TESTIMONY OF HENRY C. POWELL, CHAIR  
INTERSEGMENTAL COMMITTEE OF ACADEMIC SENATES  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA ACADEMIC SENATE**

**BEFORE THE SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE MASTER PLAN  
FEBRUARY 2, 2010**

**Introduction**

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you. I am Harry Powell, Professor of Pathology at the University of California, San Diego. I am appearing here today as the of the University of California Academic Senate and the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS). ICAS is an organization of the Academic Senates of the three public higher education segments. Also in the audience today are ICAS members John Tarjan, Professor of Business at CSU Bakersfield and chair of the CSU Academic Senate, and Jane Patton, Professor of Communication Studies at Mission College here in Sacramento and chair of the California Community Colleges Academic Senate. I speak today in my role as chair of ICAS.

I'd like to take a moment to introduce ICAS. This is a coordinating body that began in the late 1970s with voluntary discussions among the leaders of the three academic Senates, who were concerned with finding common solutions to difficulties in the transfer process and challenges of underprepared high school graduates. They began to meet formally in the fall of 1980. Thirty years later, the faculties of the three segments continue to collaborate around these and related

issues for which faculty have the decisive role - and in UC's case, delegated authority - in maintaining academic quality and ensuring student success. We have been particularly effective in developing clear statements of what students need to about various subjects to be successful in college, in developing a commonly recognized lower division general education curriculum

I want you to remember three things from my remarks today. (1) The Master Plan represented a historic commitment by Californians to Californians future at a time of great challenge. (2) The Master Plan design - a three-part system of public higher education with clearly demarcated missions for each segment - has been successful on a scale not imagined by its designers in providing access to higher education for Californians. (3) Today Californians face a real risk of losing access to public higher education both by being denied entrance and by being denied the resources they need to be successful after they arrive at an institution.

### **Master Plan as Historic Commitment to Californians**

I was asked to appear to day to address "the value of universal access for all Californians to our higher education system." As faculty, we continue to endorse and hold dear Master Plan pledge that public postsecondary education will be available to every Californian capable of benefiting from it. Appearing before another joint committee on the Master Plan in 1999, Clark Kerr offered an eloquent

description of the daunting challenge the Master Plan architects faced and what they set out to do:

What did we try to do in 1960? First of all, we faced this enormous tidal wave, 600,000 students added to higher education in California in a single decade. There were new campuses that had to be built, faculty members that had to be hired, and so forth, and it looked like an absolutely enormous, perhaps even impossible, challenge before us. We started out in our Master Plan asking the state to commit itself, despite the size of this enormous tidal wave, to create a place in higher education for every single young person who had a high school degree or was otherwise qualified so that they could be sure, if they got a high school degree or became otherwise qualified that they would have a place waiting for them. That was our first and basic commitment. I might say it was the first time in the history of any state in the United States, or any nation in the world, where such a commitment was made -- that a state or a nation would promise there would be a place ready for every high school graduate or person otherwise qualified. It was an enormous commitment, and the basis for the Master Plan.

(August 24, 1999 testimony to Joint Master Plan Committee (full remarks

available at <http://www.ucop.edu/acadinit/mastplan/kerr082499.htm>)

**The Master Plan Achievement: Three distinct missions combined to offer unprecedented access to higher education**

I think you are familiar with the three distinct missions of California's public higher education segments, but I wonder if you are equally familiar with the manner in which the very existence of those three missions has made the promise of universal access a reality.

UC was assigned the research mission along with the task of educating undergraduates academically strong enough to participate in and appreciate

research environment and advanced graduate & professional students from California and elsewhere. These students are expected to and do perform valuable work even while they are studying, both as teachers and as contributors to cutting-edge research. Moreover, by maintaining nationally recognized graduate and professional programs, UC attracts some of the world's most talented people to California, where many remain after completing their studies. Just consider the number of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs who first came to California to do graduate work at UC.

The California State University was designated as the primary provider of undergraduate education and Masters-level training, with a particular emphasis on providing advanced training for practical leaders rather than researchers in fields like education, businesses, public administration, the allied health professions, and engineering. The scope and scale of CSU's contribution to California is illustrated by numbers: In 2007-08, CSU awarded over 73,000 bachelor's degrees and over 18,000 master's degrees.

By opening doors to anyone who seeks and can benefit from post-secondary education, regardless of age and educational handicaps, California Community Colleges serve simultaneously as a first and last resort. For students intending to pursue a four-year degree, CCCs offer an affordable and local way to combine study with work and family responsibilities, and they are less expensive to operate

than four-year institutions. CCCs also offer basic academic skills training to would-be transfer students who have not yet mastered everything they need to know for baccalaureate-level study. The CCC path to a four-year degree is a foundational component of California's guarantee and ensures that it is available to students come from the widest diversity of backgrounds – ethnic, economic, age, personal experience. For students seeking immediate employment skills and for employers seeking skilled workers, the CCCs are invaluable. Students in employment-focused training programs come from all ages and income levels and seek preparation for everything from entry-level positions to skilled technical positions in fields as diverse as nursing, solar installation, and computer graphics. Some CCC students are career changers taking prerequisites for more advanced training in scientific and technical fields such as public health and engineering. CCCs are remarkably nimble, developing new career training programs quickly as new fields emerge.

Our three-part system has fulfilled the promise of access beyond all expectations. By 1975, total enrollment was 1.4 million - double the original Master Plan estimate, and today we serve more than 3 million students in the three public segments. Between 1995 and 2007, facing "Tidal Wave II," the children of the original Master Plan's Tidal Wave, California public colleges and universities made huge strides on access. For example, the number of bachelor's degrees

awarded in California rose from 83,000 in 1977 to 153,000 in 2007, an increase of 84% during a time when the California population grew 69%. (Public Policy

Institute of California, *Closing the Gap: Meeting California's Need for College*

*Graduates*(2009) at 5, calculations based on CPEC data.) CPEC reported in 2009:

In 1995, CPEC estimated correctly that more than 455,000 additional students would seek enrollment at California public colleges and universities by 2005. During the following seven consecutive years of economic expansion, the state made good on its commitment of providing educational opportunity to all qualified prospective students, most of whom enrolled in a community college.

[<http://www.cpec.ca.gov/completereports/2009reports/09-28.pdf>]

### **Today's Threat to the Promise of Access to Higher Education**

Despite its success, the Master Plan is clearly at risk today, with CCC, CSU, and UC all forced to begin turning away students after several years of educating thousands of students above their funded levels. At UC, for example, we have 15,000 students above budgeted levels. Last year, UC reduced freshman enrollment targets by 2,300. UC is planning another reduction of 1,500 this year (less than a previously announced reduction of 2,300). CSU eliminated new spring enrollment this year and reduced freshman enrollment by approximately 40,000. The community colleges CCC did not formally reduce enrollment, but reports indicate that upwards of 200,000 students have not been able to enroll in needed classes.

Just yesterday, the *California Report*, broadcast on National Public Radio station KQED in San Francisco, reported that the 70 community college programs in

nursing are turning away thousands of qualified applicants even though the state needs 10,000 new licensed nurses.

The Public Policy Institute of California predicts that if today's demographic and college going trends continue, to 2025, 35 % of Californians will possess baccalaureate degrees while 41 % of jobs will require them, for a total shortage of college-educated workers of approximately 1 million. (Public Policy Institute of California, *Closing the Gap: Meeting California's Need for College Graduates*(2009) at 5)

The threat to access does not come only from restricted admissions. Budget cuts within the segments are already undermining our ability to provide the programs students need after they are admitted. To progress successfully through to graduation, students need:

- The right classes available for in the right sequence and at the right time – but cuts mean fewer classes, and larger classes;
- The best possible faculty - brilliant researchers, talented teachers, and caring mentors – but all three segments are laying off lecturers and sharply reducing recruitment of permanent faculty;

- Facilities - classrooms, laboratories, libraries, technology, student life infrastructure – but all three segments are deferring maintenance and reducing staffing for infrastructure;
- Counseling to ensure they know which classes they need to take to reach their goals, especially for students who plan to transfer, and to identify areas where skills need improvement - but all three segments are cutting counseling staffs.

As faculty, we are engaged every day in teaching, mentoring, and working with students. We are acutely aware of the growing gap between what good teaching requires and the resources we have and of the growing financial burden our students are carrying. Yet our students inspire us, and we remain committed to the vision of universal access to quality higher education envisioned in the Master Plan.

Thank you for listening.